

Your guide to the sky at night

Teign Valley, Dartmoor

Discover the beauty and tranquillity of the Teign Valley, near Castle Drogo, on this night time stroll. A steep sided wooded gorge situated on the edge of Dartmoor provides stunning views across the high moor by day. By night the wide open skies provide a magical location for star gazing and wildlife spotting.

Start: National Trust Car Park, Castle Drogo, Drewsteignton, South Devon.

Grid ref: SX724902 (for car park)

Maps: 191 Landranger (Okehampton & North Dartmoor) or 113 Explorer (Okehampton).

How to get here

By bus: Devon Stagecoach No. 173 – Exeter to Moretonhampstead, Monday to Saturday, passing Exeter Central railway station. Carmel Coaches No. 274 from Okehampton railway station, Sunday and Bank Holidays, May to September. Please check bus times before travelling www.transportdirect.info

By train: nearest station - Yeoford 8 miles away. www.thetrainline.co.uk

By road: 5 miles south of A30 Exeter to Okehampton. Take the A382 Whiddon Down-Moretonhampstead road; turn off at Sandy Park. Follow the brown National Trust signs to Castle Drogo. Car park at Castle Drogo.

Introduction to dark skies

Big open skies are a wonderful feature of our countryside and on a clear night, you can see over 4,000 stars sparkling in our universe. July and August are great months for star gazing and we have given you a helping hand by providing a separate star chart and constellations fact sheet to discover the wonders of the night sky. **Please remember to print off and take with you!**

This dark skies guide is aimed at families and anyone unfamiliar with astronomy and will introduce you to a tried and tested star gazing venue in the National Trust countryside.

Our favourite night time wonders for summer

- ☀ The *Summer Triangle* is made up of three bright stars positioned in a triangle, directly overhead. Look out also for the *Plough* and *Great Bear*
- ☀ The *Perseid meteor shower* is due on the 23 July, reaching its peak on 12 August.
- ☀ The *Milky Way*, a ribbon of millions of stars, threads its way across the night sky.

So why not follow Galileo Galilei's footsteps... choose a clear night, binoculars and a torch for a spot of summer star gazing.



Teign Valley is a dramatic, steep sided woodland valley on Dartmoor, teeming with wildlife and history.

Our star gazing spot is at **Piddledown Common**, with excellent views across the high moors by day and the wide open sky by night.

© National Trust



The valley comes alive with wildlife at night!

Listen out for the *toowhit-twhoo* of the **Tawny Owl**, a familiar woodland sound on a summer night.

Dusk is when **bats** come out to hunt, swooping through the valley in search of moths and other insects.

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Deer are shy animals and dawn and dusk are the best time to catch a glimpse.

Badgers come out to feed and play at dusk. Listen out for snorting, coughing or noisy munching as they pick their way through the undergrowth, eating worms, beetles and other insects.

© NTPL/Mike Williams

Distance, terrain & accessibility

½ mile (0.8km) long linear route (1mile/1.6km return). The terrain is essentially flat with grass and stony paths, with one slope. There are two star gazing spots, ¼ mile (0.6km) and ½ mile (0.8km) from the car park. Please be aware of trip hazards in the dark.

Directions...

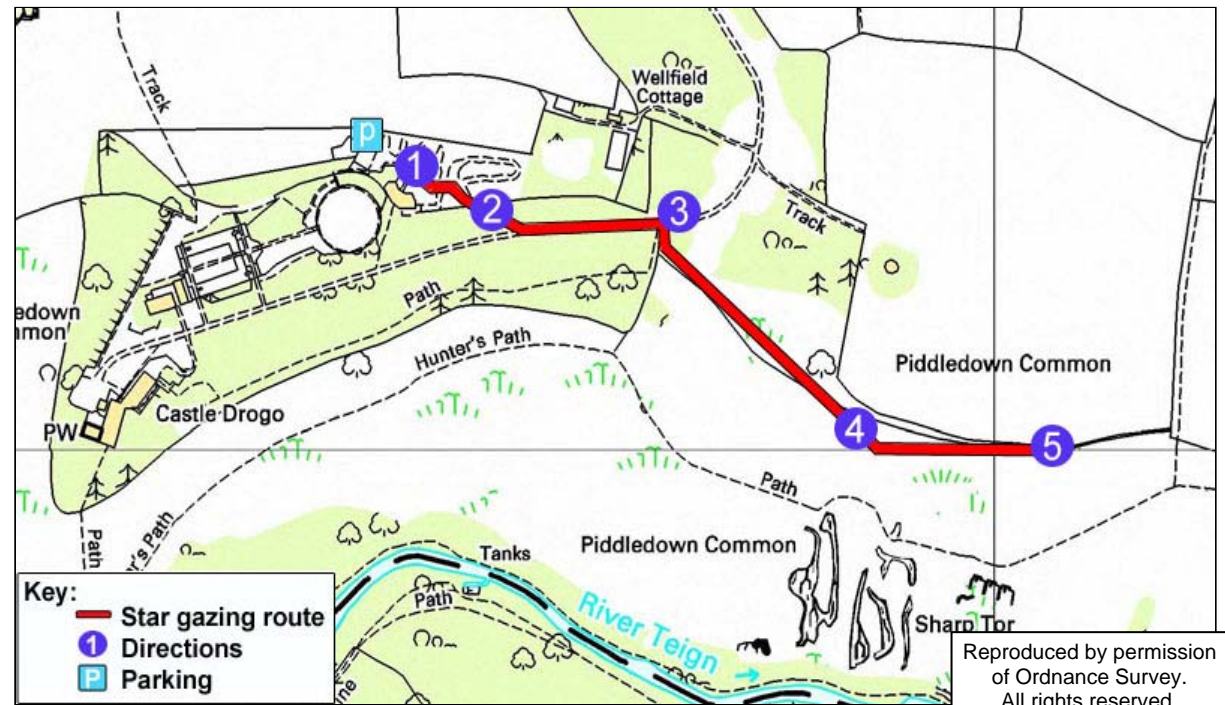
1. Start in the car park and walk out of the car park back to the drive.
2. Turn left and follow the drive until you reach a sign to Hunters Path.
3. Turning right, follow the path through the trees until you emerge onto a grassy area.

Star gazing spot 1 - there are good views of the night sky here, looking west.

4. As you emerge on to the grassy area follow the path bearing left across the grass. Follow the path up the slope and past the trees to Piddledown Common.

Star gazing spot 2 – lay a blanket on the ground at Piddledown Common and take in the excellent views of the wide open sky.

5. Return to the car park along the same route.



Teign Valley by day

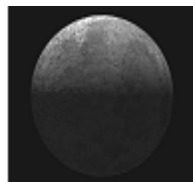
There are excellent walks through the wooded **Teign Valley**, following the fast flowing **River Teign** as it tumbles down from Dartmoor. Nearby **Fingle Bridge**, nestled by the river, is an idyllic beauty spot and a great place for a picnic. **Sharp Tor** provides spectacular views of the Teign Valley and the high moor.

Contact us for more information: 01626 834748 or email: dartmoor@nationaltrust.org.uk

August Moon Calendar

When the moon orbits the Earth, the surface is lit by sunlight. At different times in the month, a different shape is lit, called a "phase". Phases are repeated every 29.5 days.

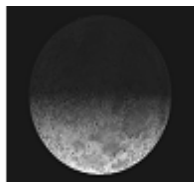
Thank you to At-Bristol Planetarium for the moon calendar



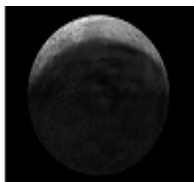
30 July
Half Moon



6 August
Full Moon



13 August
Half Moon



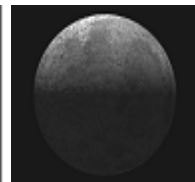
17 August
Crescent Moon



20 August
New Moon



24 August
Crescent Moon



28 August
Half Moon

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Find out more at www.nationaltrust.org.uk

